

Program Information Sheet

Program Name

Climate and Societal Interactions Division Regional Integrated Science and Assessments (RISA) Program

Program Mission

The RISA program supports the development of knowledge, expertise, and abilities of decision-makers to plan and prepare for climate variability and change. Through regionally-focused and interdisciplinary research and engagement teams, RISA builds and expands the Nation's capacity to adapt and become resilient to extreme weather events and climate change. RISA teams accomplish this through co-developed applied research and partnerships with public and private communities. A central tenet of the RISA program is that learning about climate adaptation and resilience is facilitated by and sustained across a wide range of experts, practitioners, and the public. As such, the RISA program supports a network of people, prioritizing wide participation in learning by doing, learning through adapting, and managing risk with uncertain information. Early decades of the program focused on understanding the use of climate information at regional scales (e.g., through experimental seasonal outlooks), improving predictions and scenarios, building capacity for drought early warning, and advancing the science of climate impact assessments. More recently, emphasis has shifted to address the growing urgency to advance approaches that tackle the complex societal issues surrounding adaptation planning, implementation, and building community resilience. To do so, RISA continues to prioritize collaborative approaches that incorporate multiple knowledge sources and integrate social, physical, and natural science, resulting in long-term support of and increased capacity for communities. As the adaptation community in the United States advances and evolves, RISA seeks to support new creative, solution-oriented approaches that are both responsive to communities and that integrate across silos of scientific knowledge and expertise. Central to achieving the RISA mission are:

- Regional Relevance, Local Expertise

RISA teams carry out a variety of projects focused on regional issues related to climate change and extreme weather. These projects span disciplinary, sectoral, environmental, and social concerns, but are always based in ground-up expressions of local need. In order to build trusted partnerships to address these needs, RISA teams are composed of place-based experts from universities, non-profits, and other organizations commanding local knowledge and engaged with community solutions.

- Integrated Scientific Approaches

RISA teams generate cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research on the impacts of climate on communities. Through an applied paradigm, RISA scientists develop unique ways of bringing together natural, physical, and social sciences around complex climatic concerns

related to human-environmental interactions. RISA teams generate new scientific knowledge of how broader contexts for risk and resilience shape the successful implementation of adaptation strategies, resiliency plans, and risk-reducing activities. This work includes understanding the social and cultural impacts of climate change, governance structures, laws, and fiscal policies that shape climate adaptation and implementation processes, and how this impacts equitable adaptation strategies. RISA teams contribute to identifying research questions and needs that in turn feed into NOAA’s climate research planning and activities.

- Knowledge to Action Partnerships

RISA teams engage in co-production and other processes for working across organizational lines, and include scientists, cooperative extension and outreach professionals, local planners and decision makers, community members, and communicators to ensure knowledge-to-action tools, technologies, and other products that increase capacity for making decisions in a rapidly changing environment. The experimental and innovative nature of RISAs extends beyond “snapshot” assessments, tools, or other products alone. The dialogue between scientists and stakeholders also provides an ideal setting for social scientists and outreach experts, working with practitioners, to evaluate how well science is informing societal outcomes.

- A National Network of Resilience Researchers and Adaptation Science Specialists

Relationships across RISAs ensure that information and expertise are shared between regions to develop national capacity to adapt to climate change. This network not only spans the RISAs but also draws upon other NOAA entities and federally funded state and regional partners, where relevant. This network ensures best practices, data access, coordinated efforts, and leveraged funding. RISAs also build the network through education and professional development, engaging a variety of early career professionals, including students across undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and continuing education/professional levels in learning and mentoring activities that equip them to effectively address climate variability and change in the workforce.

Focus for FY21

In FY21, the RISA program is soliciting proposals for two competitions:

Competition 1- will fund up to one RISA team in each of the following nine regions: Northeast, MidAtlantic, Intermountain West, Carolinas, Great Lakes, Alaska, Pacific Islands, South Central, and Pacific Northwest.

Competition 2 - will fund collaborative planning activities in the Southeast and Caribbean regions of the United States. RISA anticipates funding no more than four collaborative planning activity awards.

Funding for FY21

Competition 1

Proposals being solicited for a RISA team award, should be in the \$600,000 - \$700,000/year range for core RISA work.

Sustained Assessment Supplement: Applicants can propose \$100- \$135K/year (in addition to the core team award) for the specialist and associated activities, including indirect costs, for up to 5 years. The Program anticipates funding no more than 3 sustained assessment specialists across the RISA network; therefore, not all RISA team awards will include this component.

Small-Grant Competition Supplement: Applicants can propose up to \$160k total for the duration of the project (in addition to the core team award) to support a small grants competition. The Program anticipates funding no more than 3 small-grant competitions across the RISA network; therefore, not all RISA team awards will include this component.

Competition 2

For proposals being solicited for collaborative planning activities, awards will be at a funding level of up to \$100,000 total per award for projects up to one year in duration. The program anticipates funding up to 4 awards.

Competition Information

1. Determining Geographic Scope (Relevant to Competitions 1 and 2)

Regions have been an organizing influence for both decision makers and scientists working on climate adaptation. Beginning with shared climate shifts and extreme weather events, critical resources for society like water, electricity and transportation are managed in a context of regional systems. Regions also possess a cultural identity (or identities), a set/s of practices and beliefs shaped by the subgroups of people living within and interacting with a common climate and environment. These identities, along with the historical context and other social structures of a landscape make decision-making within a region unique. Climate information (i.e. data, science, research, etc.) working across spatial and temporal scales must resonate with people making decisions on the ground and their socio-cultural frameworks. The role of RISA as a federally funded, regional scale, climate adaptation and resilience program is to understand and build relationships and capacity across state lines and jurisdictions, that include a variety of local, state, federal, and tribal governments, and public and private institutions in order to improve shared knowledge and management efforts.

Proposals for RISA teams do not need to maintain the exact geographic focus as the current RISA teams, but should cover at least some portion of the general regional geographies listed below. When determining the geographic scope of your RISA, applicants should consider what is manageable to effectively work with stakeholders. Current RISA regions generally cover

two to four states, large watershed boundaries, or issue-focused areas (e.g., the urbanized, heavily populated corridor between Boston, New York, and Philadelphia). The geographic focus should allow for work within and across sectors. For example, a geographic focus defined by a watershed area should not preclude research on urban health or agriculture, and vice-versa. The geographic scope does not need to follow state boundaries and can include border areas of neighboring regions when there are significant environmental or cultural similarities that would benefit from inclusion in the RISA. For example, portions of New York State are currently covered by multiple RISA teams based on the regional definition of their team.

The following are the Geographic Areas being competed in FY21:

Competition 1 - Regional RISA Teams

1. **Northeast:** New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island
2. **MidAtlantic:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia
3. **Intermountain West:** Colorado, Utah, Wyoming
4. **Carolinas:** North Carolina, South Carolina
5. **Great Lakes:** Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio
6. **Alaska**
7. **Pacific Islands:** Hawaii and U.S. affiliated Pacific islands and territories
8. **South Central:** Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana
9. **Pacific Northwest:** Washington, Oregon, Idaho

Competition 2 - Collaborative Planning Activities for the Southeast and the U.S. Caribbean

1. **Southeast:** Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee
2. **U.S. Caribbean:** Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

2. Additional Resources Related to RISA Teams

For more information on currently funded RISA teams please see:

<https://cpo.noaa.gov/Meet-the-Divisions/Climate-and-Societal-Interactions/RISA/RISA-Teams>

For information on key characteristics of impactful RISA teams please see:

<https://www.cpo.noaa.gov/risa/risa-team-structure>

For an additional reference, see:

Combest-Friedman, C., C. Nierenberg, C. Simpson 2019. "Building a Learning Network: Reflections from the RISA Program" *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*. 39: 160-166

Parris, A.S., G. M. Garfin, K. Dow, R. Meyer, S.L. Close, Eds. 2016. *Climate in Context: Science and Society Partnering for Adaptation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

3. Additional Resources Related to Sustained Assessment Specialists

The sustained assessment specialist must be resident at a RISA and included as part of the RISA team. The sustained assessment specialist should undertake work supporting the RISA's proposed focus areas, which could help to inform USGCRP NCA goals. Relevant activities for the sustained assessment specialist might include, but are not limited to:

1. Synthesizing research findings and information about adaptation activities in the region to support ongoing input to the NCA process, to document relevant regional processes, and to identify gaps in the assessment literature and relevant climate and adaptation science;
2. Collecting, analyzing and conveying information about regional decision makers' needs to help shape future assessment priority topics, products and processes;
3. Acting as a liaison between the RISA network within an NCA region and the NCA interests at USGCRP and NOAA, and providing relevant engagement and communications support;
4. Helping to strengthen regional networks toward improving climate assessment capacity in the region, including with other federal partners and federally-funded capabilities, where relevant;
5. Enabling broader engagement from communities or groups that often are not able to engage with either the NCA process or broader regional climate assessments;
6. Collaborating with other regional climate assessment specialists within the RISA network to foster cross-regional understanding of assessment work and share lessons ;
7. Documenting assessment and engagement practices in the region to communicate best practices and pitfalls broadly.

learn more about the USGCRP, the NCA, and the “sustained assessment” vision here:
<http://www.globalchange.gov/engage/processproducts/sustained-assessment>

Learn about the experiences of current RISA Sustained Assessment Specialists here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3FGkuY4p8I&feature=youtu.be>

Additional Factors for Proposal Preparation

This section is intended to provide additional information for successful submission for both competitions. For both competitions, teams are only permitted to submit one application per proposal.

Specifics about the Proposal

Competitive proposals will show that the work being produced will build on what is already known from practitioner experience, traditional knowledge and the published literature about the proposed topic. The proposal should demonstrate that the PIs have a comprehensive knowledge and expertise and that their proposed work will augment the existing knowledge and engagement.

Nature of Investigator Teams

Multidisciplinary teams of investigators are best suited for addressing the complex issues related to climate, society and enhanced adaptation through the use of science and technology. Previous successful projects/teams have integrated strong social with natural or physical science components to form a more comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of climate-human interactions. Social science expertise that can investigate socio-cultural issues of climate risk and barriers and opportunities for climate resilience and adaptation is highly encouraged. Finally, the proposal should include an explanation of the roles of the investigators and how the team will interact and integrate the multiple components. Investigators who will not be requesting funds for salaries must also be listed, along with their estimated time of commitment.

Partners

Partnerships and collaborations between researchers and critical decision-making institutions in the region of study are expected and might include: NOAA and other federal agencies, tribal governments, non- governmental organizations, boundary organizations, international organizations and regional networks, extension services, state and local governments, and representative private sector organizations. Any in-kind time should be reported within the proposal. Letters of support, or commitment, from partners are encouraged to accompany the proposals.

Contact Information

Questions should be directed to the RISA Program Managers at oar.cpo.risa@noaa.gov